

50th Anniversary of

History

Launched on 5 May 1963 by the Duke of Edinburgh at the brand new Linwood factory in Scotland, the origins of the Hillman Imp go back to 1955, before the 1956 Suez crisis that led to petrol rationing and the rise of the German 'bubble' cars, as well as the Mini.

The Rootes Group covered most segments of the market between its Hillman family cars, premium Singers, luxury Humbers and sporty Sunbeams – but with the growth of the Minx it had no presence in the small-car market, and thus a project to investigate possibilities for a small car was started.

The search for an engine resulted in an 875cc variant of the Coventry Climax fire pump-come-racing engine, detuned for use in the Imp. To counteract the rearward weight bias, a more sophisticated rear suspension was used to avoid oversteer. The car had a top speed of 80 mph (130 km/h) and would get 40 mpg (7L/100km). The Imp also had a much better ride than a Mini and more interior room. Imps were assembled from completely knocked-down (CKD) kits in the Port Melbourne factory, with a higher performance GT variant introduced in 1967.



Although Australian sales stopped after 1969, the Imp continued to be produced in the UK without substantial change until 1976 when the factory capacity was needed for other vehicles. The Imp went out of production after 440,000 had been built across all variants. Unfortunately sales figures are not available for Australia.

Rootes Group Car Club

The RGCC has a smattering of Imps amongst its members, and is able to provide parts, support and specialised tools to keep them on the road.



the Hillman Imp



Competition History

There have been some notable motorsport results from the Imp, which was highly competitive in its class. An Imp also achieved outright victory on the 1965 Tulip Rally driven by Rosemary Smith and three consecutive British Saloon Car Championship titles from 1970-1972 by George Bevan Racing. Imps ran at Bathurst 3 times but the most prominent Imp in Australia was run by Norm Beechey in hillclimbs with great success, while in New Zealand there was the Sidchrome Imp driven by Jim Richards.



50 Year Events – Join the Celebration!

Sunday April 21st – RACV / AOMC Classic Showcase

Flemington Racecourse Carpark, 10am. The RGCC will be putting on a display of Imps, paraphernalia and historical videos. More information at <http://www.aomc.asn.au/B&Eshow13.htm> All Rootes vehicles welcome.

Saturday November 2nd – Monday November 4th – Aussie pilgrimage to Linwood, South Australia

Those of us who cannot make it to the UK will be doing the next best thing – visiting Linwood, South Australia. This Linwood is more famous for quarries and goats than iconic car production... but it promises to be a fun weekend anyway. The rally will be based in Hahndorf. All Impers and other Rootes cars welcome! Accommodation at the Hahndorf Motor Lodge. For more information contact rootesgroupcarclub@bigpond.com

50th Anniversary Regalia

The IMP Club UK has some fabulous t-shirts for sale. For more information or to join our club order, contact [Kristi Lambert](mailto:Kristi.Lambert@impclubuk.com).

